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Some Notes on the Terena Indian Tribe
[Einige Notizen über den Indianerstamm der Terenos]

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13) The territory of the Tereno /Terena/ Indians extends west
[361] of the Brazilian city of Miranda to the Bolivian border. Their
first village lies two leguas, the last one about 12-14 leguas,
101 from the above-mentioned city. The Terenos are Chaco Indians
[167] and migrated about 60 years ago from the Bolivian Chaco to their
present habitation site. In external appearance they greatly
resemble the Lenguas and have also some customs and practices
142 in common with them. The men are mostly slender and tall,
and at the same time muscular; the women are medium-sized,
likewise robust, and many are corpulent. The /405/ face is
broad with prominent cheekbones, the nose broad, pressed flat,
the nostrils large, the eyes dark-brown, the mouth wide, pro-
302 truding, the hair blue-black, stiff, and coarse. Most pluck out
178 the eyelashes and beard hair, but the present generation seems
to want to abandon this bad custom, for I saw some young girls
771 and men who were equipped with very beautiful eyelashes. The
797 Terenos call themselves Christians, despite the fact that they
have no notion of Christian belief. Their children are neither
baptized nor confirmed; also, they do not know our Christian
holidays. I never saw Terenos praying, and no one wore a rosary,
[178] which is considered the chief sign of Catholic faith here. They
[221] cling to their old customs and, like their forefathers, still worship
648 the stars. In the war against Paraguay they served the Brazilians
well, and as a consequence some caciques of Brazil held a
commission as alferes, which they showed me with great pride
361 and asked me to read it aloud. I visited six villages (aldeas),
[114] which were not very different from one another. An aldea con-
sists of three to six family-huts and some small ranchos. The
592 family huts are low, but very long and spacious, and in some of
them 30 and more people live under a common head. In most
cases this is the oldest man of the family. All the daughters re-
main in the hut in which they were born, and they marry there.
[591] As soon as a girl marries, a new bed is built, and the young hus-
[353] band moves into the family hut of his wife. In one hut I counted
12 such beds, which were set up in two rows, similar to a hospital.

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592 Since most men have two wives and as a rule have children by
[595] each one, the bedsteads have to be made very large. Most are
[352] so large that six adult persons can sleep on them. If the fertility
in a family hut is so great that the latter becomes too small,
the youngest families build themselves small huts nearby or
353 establish a new family-house. The interior arrangement is the
same in all the huts. The beds are set up in one or two rows.
[415] Near the bed each family has its property in large nets or bags,
either hung on a hut post or on a yntocoqui. In addition, one
sees many earthenware dishes and calabashes here, in all sizes
and shapes, which contain all sorts of things and in part stand on
[411] the floor, in part are hung up. Some weaving frames, bows,
arrows, lances, and guns complete the equipment.

622 Each village has a commander (subchief), and the whole
643 nation is ruled by a cacique, who has a commission as capitão
648 /captain, chief/ from the Brazilian government. This ruler of
643 all the Terenos received me in a very friendly manner, showed
123 me above all /406/ his commission and then a photograph of
Emperor Pedro II, whom he called his amigo. His costume looked
[292] very interesting. He had wound a chiripá around his bare legs,
while the upper part of his body was stuffed into a worn-out
military coat without any buttons. After I had sacrificed a few
bottles of caña /rum/, he presented me with a fan for flies, and
we took most cordial leave from each other.

291 The chief article of clothing of the Terenos is the chiripá,
a rectangular piece of cloth which is wound around the loins.
Both sexes wore this chiripá. Many men were clothed in shirts
or trousers. I often saw young girls with bright-colored cotton
[439] jackets on their bare bodies. They buy or barter for the last-
302 mentioned articles of clothing in Miranda. Young girls and women
paint their faces with black paint, whereas the men decorate
312 their bodies with it only for festivals. Since the Rio de Miranda
439 has salt water, the Indian women provide fresh spring water for
the place. Daily in Miranda, early in the morning, one sees

312 /406 cont./ Daily in Miranda, early in the morning, one sees
439 many women with nets filled with water calabashes, which they
[415] carry on a forehead band.

241 The Terenos plant cotton, maize, and chiefly mandioca.
242 The last-named root is the principal constituent of their diet.
439 A flour (farinha de mandioca) which they make out of the above-
286 named root always finds a good market in Miranda. The Terenos display much taste and patience with regard to weaving. A girl often works six months and more on a hammock. To make up for it, however, these things are also durable and solidly made.
[53] The hammocks are white with a red or blue pattern. They obtain
[38] the blue dye from a plant which they call uito (in any case, indigo).
The stems and leaves of the plant named are boiled and then the
[439] yarn is dipped in this brew. The red wool which often appears in their woven work comes from red flannel which they barter for in Miranda. This flannel is cut into pieces, pulled to threads, and then spun again. I saw weaving frames of all sizes with work begun on them in all the huts. They greatly prize their own products, because the latter are very durable, and only very unwillingly yield to bartering them. If they do this, they demand
[415] an audaciously high price for them. The red and white bags with
[53] blue and white bead embroidery are very popular; such bags are
[586] usually the first present from the bride to the bridegroom.

323 The Terenos are likewise very skilled in the making of pottery and display quite a special taste in this. The manufacture is very simple and without any tools. The potter kneels on the stamped, hard, smooth ground; at his side lies a pile of sticky clay, from which he rolls a piece into a ball; he then rolls this into a long roll and forms a ring out of it. He now lays several such rings over one another /407/ and presses and smooths with his hands the vessel thus produced, until it has the proper form. When the vessel is finished to this extent, the pattern is impressed with a string into the still soft mass of clay; it is dried in the sun for a few days, and then it is fired in a very simple manner. That is, the utensils are covered with dry wood and then the latter is set afire. After a few hours the crockery is taken out and the impressed

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323 pattern is painted with palosanto resin on the still red-hot vessel. Later, when the crockery has cooled, the design is completed
415 with red and white paint. In all the huts one finds clay utensils in every possible shape and size and suitable for every possible purpose. I saw bowls of over a meter in diameter, which are used for the preparation of mandioca flour. I would gladly have taken a few of them with me, but it was impossible for me to
323 transport them. Both sexes, moreover, make pottery, but the
462 impressing of the patterns, as well as painting them, falls to the women.

285 The men take care of plaiting baskets and hats. The baskets
294 are usually made of split bamboo, whereas the material for hats
[462] is obtained from the dried leaves of a fan palm--called
[824] carnauba. The hats find a good market in Miranda and, despite
[437] the cheap price, leave nothing to be desired with regard to durability.

585 A wedding is celebrated in two ways. The older ceremony
[178] is gradually dying out, since the culture is progressing mightily
[411] and the rifle will soon have driven out the bow and arrow. The ceremony is the following: toward noon six girls, all adorned with feathers and painting, go to the bridegroom's hut. The latter hands over bow and arrows to them, whereupon the girls, singing and dancing, bring these weapons to the bride and then go home. After sundown six young men, adorned in the same manner, fetch the bridegroom and, dancing and singing, lead him to the bride's hut. As soon as he enters the hut, he extends his right hand to the bride and the marriage is concluded.--
585 More common, however, is a second type of marriage ceremony,
273 for at it there is caña to drink. All the members of the family gather in the hut of the bride, and likewise in the bridegroom's house. Thereupon the bridegroom with his whole family goes to the hut of the bride. In front a large basket-bottle of caña is borne; behind it follow the musicians who play the yntaca and ujoe, and finally the bridegroom with the rest of the family. The bride sits on a hammock and also has a large bottle of caña

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585 standing near her. The bridegroom now sits down beside the
273 bride, whereupon the latter exchanges her bottle of caña with the bottle of the bridegroom. /408/ The bridegroom's family then goes home and drinks up the bride's liquor. The bridegroom remains in the bride's hut and empties the other bottle with her family. The marriage ties are knotted by this exchange of the
591 two bottles. The husband always remains in the family hut of his
595 wife. If there are more marriageable girls there, he takes a second wife, but no ceremony takes place in connection with this.

796 Upa a ne voty. Festival of the seven stars. This great festival of the Terenos is celebrated in the month of April. A week before the festival two old men go from hut to hut: the one arranges for musicians; the other invites the men for the scheduled
[273] night. The guests must provide everything necessary, especially caña, before the festival, for the more there is to drink, the more splendid the festival. On the scheduled night, between one and two o'clock, all the men gather in the festival plaza. One of the oldest men stands in the middle of the plaza, holding a lance in his hand; the others squat on the ground, forming a circle around the old man. Then the old man speaks, his face turned toward the east: I am the grandfather of all the chiefs who live in the east! He then enumerates all the names of the latter known to him. Then he turns to the north, then to the west, then to the south, and repeats the same thing. In this way he pretends to be the grandfather of all the important men of the
[82] world. He then looks toward the sky and asks the seven stars for
[782] rain and implores them to protect his people from war, sickness, snakebites, etc. This prayer lasts for some hours. As soon as the prayer is ended, the old man lets out a howl, whereupon the whole company jumps up, howls, rattles, shoots, and makes a terrible noise with all sorts of instruments. The old man then goes home, while the company goes around the plaza with shouting and up-
796 roar until dawn. Four to six small leaf-houses are built around
533 the plaza for the musicians. Toward six o'clock in the evening the above-mentioned old man gives a sign with the yntaca,

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796 whereupon the musicians go into their little houses and start
[533] noisy music. Then there are dancing and drinking the whole night through, and not until the first gray of dawn do the festival
796 participants disperse. During the forenoon of the second day all
541 the young men gather at the plaza, split up into two opposing parties, and attack each other until one party is beaten. This fight takes place without weapons, but the fists are used vigorously, and most have bloody heads after the battle. I was shown a young Indian who had lost an eye this way. After the fight everybody
796 gathers in the hut of the chief. One of the musicians, /409/ who
[228] is lavishly adorned, carries stag antlers in his right hand and limps to a hut pointed out to him, knocks there with the antlers on the door post, and limps back. Then the owner of the hut comes out and asks what is wanted, whereupon everybody shouts: A head of cattle (cow or bull)! (The whole tribe buys this head of cattle
[262] before the festival.) Then the man goes back and fetches the head of cattle, which is immediately slaughtered and eaten. As soon as the meat is consumed and the cafia drunk up, everyone goes home, and with this the festival is over.

796 The second great festival of the Terenos is called mainu and
541 sometimes lasts 14 days. Early in the morning on the first day,
562 all the men have a rendezvous at a place kept secret from the
[302] women, paint themselves until they are unrecognizable, and
[411] then rush shouting into the village, shooting their guns and bows, and act as though they were enemies and were about to attack the village. The women in the meantime have armed themselves with clubs, fruits, etc., and a mock battle then develops. The women throw gourds, clubs, etc. at the heads of their men and
796 finally drive them out of the village. In the afternoon the men
535 gather at the village plaza and place themselves in two rows.
[237] Then an oddly bedecked dancer appears. He wears a coat of
[302] leaves, his head is decorated with horns and feathers, his body painted with black and red paint. Under his right arm he carries a lance, in his left hand a club; he acts as though he were very tired, makes all sorts of grimaces in connection with this, limps

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796 535 a few hundred steps away from the company, pretends to eat, returns again to the assemblage, and for some hours carries on this farcical nonsense, with which the spectators are marvelously amused. This dance finishes the first festival day. In the plaza, usually in the middle, there is built a hut which the men enter on the afternoon of the next day. Five or six of them make themselves unrecognizable by hanging ostrich feathers over their eyes, decorating their heads with crowns of feathers, painting face and body, and tying the choatie around their legs. Then they dance, one after the other, twice around the plaza and finally return to the hut, whereupon five or six others repeat the same dance. This dance is performed every day for a few hours as long as the festival lasts. The women are not permitted to enter the hut in which the men dress up, for the big joke is that the women must guess who the dancers are. The festival lasts a longer or shorter time, depending on how much caña is on hand, and ends when the supply is exhausted.

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